



# The Waldman Times 2010



Dear friends and neighbors:

As always, it's good to be back in District 95 after the 2010 Legislative session.

As many of you know, while much of the country is recovering from the recession, Florida continues to face many economic hurdles. Therefore, during the 2010 legislative session, my colleagues and I focused much of our attention on economic development and job creation. In addition, we confronted a number of issues important to District 95, including education, and healthcare of Floridians.

The most successful legislation passed for District 95 was the signing of the Seminole Compact. I was pleased to be the ranking Democrat on the committee that crafted the compact and, because of my experience creating a compact between the Coconut Creek casino and the City of Coconut Creek, I was invited to sit at the table and participate in many of the meetings with House and Senate leadership and representatives of the tribe. The compact will bring 1.5 billion dollars to our state over the next five years and hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs here in Broward County.

I was also pleased to continue to serve as ranking Democrat on the important Rules and Calendar Council. I also serve on the House Finance & Tax Council, Criminal and Civil Justice Policy Council, Public Safety & Domestic Security Policy Committee, State Universities & Private Colleges Policy Committee and the Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight

I hope you find this legislative update to be a useful source of information on the 2010 session. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these issues or if there is anything I can assist you with, please contact my office.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity and honor to represent you.

Sincerely,

Jim Waldman

For further information on these issues, those summarized in the newsletter, or any other state issues addressed during this legislative session, please do not hesitate to call my office at 954-956-5600, or email me at [jim.waldman@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:jim.waldman@myfloridahouse.gov).



## THE FLORIDA BUDGET

The state budget approved on the final day of the 2010 session includes funding for many important local and statewide projects; but it fails, in my opinion, to meet the needs of District 95. Therefore, I voted against the \$70.4 billion spending plan.

Granted, it was a huge challenge this year to write a balanced budget. The Legislature began the session facing a \$3 billion shortfall. The new gaming compact with the Seminole Indian tribe also helped to balance the budget with a projected \$433 million in revenues for the state this year. Thankfully, our state was also able to rely upon another \$2.3 billion in federal stimulus money approved last year by President Obama and Congress along with another \$279 million in assistance that Congress is expected to approve.

I am saddened that the budget makes a \$10 million cut to a highly successful program that helps new mothers considered at risk for abusing or neglecting their children Healthy Families. Healthy Start coalitions, which serve at-risk pregnant women and infants, will see a cut of \$2.6 million. Additionally, contributions to county health departments are cut by \$10.5 million. And funding for nursing homes and hospitals are cut, including a 7-percent reduction in state payments for the care of indigent patients.

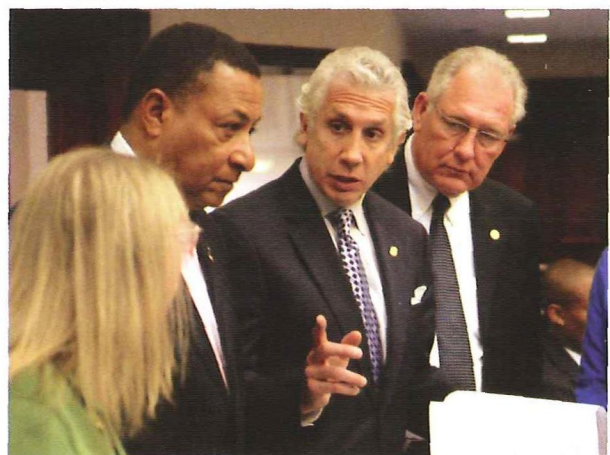
In my opinion, the budget doesn't hold education harmless. In terms of overall school funding, this budget presents the second-worst per student funding level since 2006. What's more, the budget includes whopping new university tuition hikes of up to 15 percent, just as it cuts scholarship awards under the Bright Futures program.

## HEALTH CARE

Health care for Floridians was among my major priorities during the session. Though we were able to provide funding for many basic health services during a tough budget year, I am deeply disappointed by cuts to programs for vulnerable residents.

I am, however, pleased that legislation was approved to crack down on the corrupt "pill mills" operating around the state especially in Broward. Pain clinics attract patients from all over the country who come to abuse our state's system. To curb this problem, we worked to increase regulation for pain clinics and for physicians who own or work in such clinics. Criminal and financial penalties were added to the law to give law enforcement and prosecutors needed tools to crack down on this growing problem.

Much of this session's health care discussions, however, focused on some members' desire to block certain requirements under the new federal health care reform law. To my dismay, a proposed constitutional amendment on this issue will appear on the November ballot.



*Rep. Waldman discusses strategy with fellow legislators*



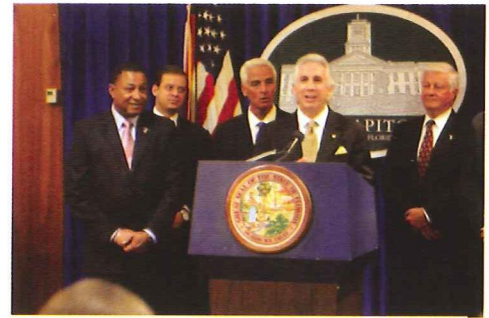
## SEMINOLE COMPACT

The compact signed by the Governor includes a detailed schedule for the distribution of 3% of the revenue sharing payment. This is to offset impacts to local government. As a result of this revenue sharing, out of this 3% in District 95 - 7.5% will go to Broward County, 65% to Coconut Creek, 15% to Coral Springs, 10% to Margate and 2.5% to Parkland.

The compact specifically grants the Tribe the right to operate slot machines for 20 years and banked card games at its facilities in Broward, Collier and Hillsborough Counties for the first 5 years of the Compact. If the Legislature does not affirmatively renew the banked card games, the tribe must cease operating banked card games within 90 days of the expiration of the five-year term. If the Tribe does not cease operations, the state is entitled to seek immediate injunctive relief in court.

In consideration of the substantial exclusivity accorded to the Tribe by the State, the Tribe agrees to make payments to the State from its net winnings as follows: Years 1 and 2, guaranteed \$150 million, years 3 and 4, guaranteed \$233 million, year 5, \$234 million, years 6 through 20 no guaranteed minimum. However, the payments will be a percent of the net win.

As part of the agreement, the bill passed by the legislature also lowers the taxes paid by the pari-mutuels from 50% to 35%. This will help create new jobs and spur economic development in our area. This compact is a win/win situation for the state, the counties and several cities in our community.

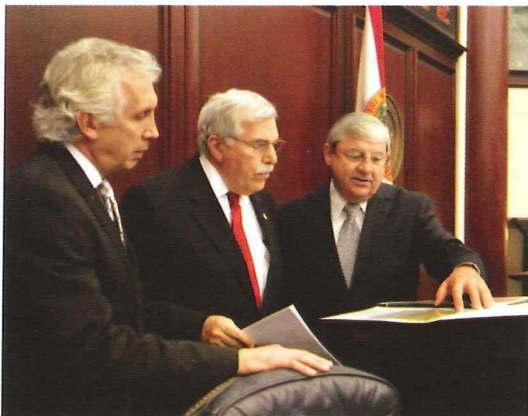


*Rep. Waldman speaking at Gov. Crist's press conference announcing the signing of the Seminole Compact*

## EDUCATION

I believe that improving public education is the first step toward creating high-wage jobs and a quality workforce that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy demands. That's why I had hoped the Legislature would have made greater progress on education reforms and would have invested more in our students.

I don't think the state budget approved by the Legislature (and which I voted against) protects education. It increases the average per-student spending by a paltry one dollar and 22 cents. School officials say their expenses, including insurance, retirement and utilities will outstrip that increase. The budget also allows for university tuition hikes of up to 15 percent, just as it cuts scholarship awards under Bright Futures.



*Rep. Waldman discusses procedure with Speaker Cretul and Minority Leader Sands*

One bright spot was that Governor Crist signed Senate Bill 4, a bipartisan measure that raises education standards and improves accountability and advances some of the reforms touted this year by some members of the Florida House Democratic Caucus. Senate Bill 4 phases out the high school Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in math, science and writing, and it introduces end-of-course exams in Algebra 1, Geometry and Biology 1.

State Representative Jim Waldman  
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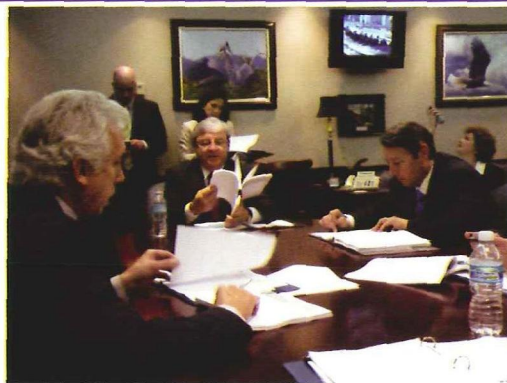
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### CONDOMINIUMS

One of the bills passed this session is of particular importance to many of the residents of District 95. This bill makes some positive changes to the condo law (Florida Statute 718). Here are just some of the highlights of the bill:

- Repeals the requirement to purchase individual unit owner insurance coverage
- Provides that certain low-rise condominium buildings with exterior corridors need not install a central fire alarm system
- Amends provisions relating to fire sprinklers by allowing association to waive retrofitting and if they do choose to retrofit, it changes the requirement date from 2014 to 2019
- Allows associations to waive the requirement to provide alternative power supplies to elevators and alarms during emergencies
- Delays retrofitting requirements related to the elevators and provides an extra 5 years for those condos who choose to retrofit.
- Increases bank liability on delinquent assessments to the lesser of 12 months or 1 percent.
- Allows condo associations to restrict usage of common areas by those owners who are delinquent in payments
- Allows condos associations to collect maintenance fees directly from renters if unit owner is in arrears



*Rep. Waldman with House Speaker Cretul and Rep. Galvano during a Pre-Session briefing*